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Titus, ed., THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CHARACTER AND VIRTUE

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contrasted usefully with Michael Rea's comments on analytic suspicions of it in his introduction to a book published the following year, *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*.² According to Rea, one prescription of philosophy in the analytic mode is "P3. Avoid substantive (non-decorative) use of metaphor and other tropes whose semantic content outstrips their propositional content" (5; see also 18–21). In *God and Mystery in Words*, however, Brown argues that "metaphors and images inherent in them are integral to helping us grasp the totality of whatever reality it is with which we wish to engage" (46); metaphors can "yield genuinely new knowledge that is by no means reducible to some weaker version of what might have been said, had a more literal or analytic approach been adopted" (56). Interestingly, for Brown part of the power of metaphor is its capacity to *connect* disparate items and thus *integrate* our experience of reality: although trained in analytic philosophy, the drive of his thought is now clearly toward imaginative integration rather than conceptual analysis.

In a project of this magnitude, there are bound to be missteps and mishaps, and to again cite Stump's review of *The Divine Trinity*, "I found a good deal to disagree with in [these] rich book[s]" (464). Despite bringing these five volumes into dialogue with contemporary philosophy of religion for the benefit of the readers of this journal, their actual genres range far more widely, and much of Brown's text reads more like straight biblical studies, or historical theology, or art history, or cultural studies, or musicology, or dramatic theory, or whatever. But they nevertheless represent a monumental achievement of recent Christian scholarship, as well as a significant challenge to the way philosophers of religion and systematic theologians typically operate. If nothing else, these five volumes may be commended as valuable general introductions to the various forms of human culture they survey, and to the religious significance of these forms. But to once again adapt Stump's comments about *The Divine Trinity*, I hope that they may also collectively stimulate a new conversation between philosophy of religion and human culture as they both explore the truth of Christian doctrine.

The Psychology of Character and Virtue, edited by Craig Steven Titus. Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2009. 134 pages. \$25 (paperback).

REBECCA KONYNDYK DEYOUNG, Calvin College

This slim book of essays—the fourth volume in the John Henry Cardinal Newman Lecture series—aims to be a collection of psychological, philosophical, and theological perspectives on "the integrity of character and

²Oliver D. Crisp and Michael C. Rea, eds., *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

the connection of the virtues" (3). The Newman Lecture series promotes the larger project of articulating an integral view of human nature among the disciplines, a view that also acknowledges God as the creator of that nature. Each essay in this volume shares a concern with character formation and virtue generally.

The volume contains engaging essays by a variety of well known thinkers: John Rist, Charles Taliaferro, Fred D. Miller, Jr., Daniel N. Robinson, Robert Audi, Richard Swinburne, and the volume and series editor, Craig Steven Titus. As interesting as the individual chapters are, their connections both to each other and to a central set of concerns Titus articulates in the opening essay were not often immediately apparent. That is, the opening essay leads the reader to expect something more internally connected and focused than what the volume delivers. Nonetheless, the chapters are certainly worth reading in their own right by those in a range of sub-disciplines and areas of interest. Roughly characterized, the first two essays concern philosophical or moral psychology, the second two, political philosophy, and the last two, ethics and philosophy of religion. The essays engage a wide range of voices, from ancient to modern to contemporary analytic philosophers, as well as political and literary figures.

In "Challenges to the Integrity of Character and Virtue" Craig Steven Titus makes a case for fruitful links between a virtue-centered approach and a rich anthropology which brings together the "bio-psycho-social domains" and disciplines focused on religious or spiritual concerns (5). He also sets out areas of challenge for studies of the virtues—accounting for the integrity of character (and its lack), relationships among the virtues (as a possibility and a problem), and the formation of moral character (its preconditions and potential pitfalls).

In "The Divided Self: A Classical Perspective," John Rist takes up the first challenge and explores Platonic dialogues that address the issue of internal conflict in the virtuous person. His conclusion is that what Plato finally offers by way of explaining this conflict is neither a body undermining the soul's quest for pure wisdom, nor a tri-partite soul at war with itself, but a single self torn between potentialities for being a different sort of person, potentialities driven by different fundamental loves.

Charles Taliaferro uses literary examples of the morally divided self from *Macbeth* and *Richard II* in "A Shakespearean Account of Redemption." His view is that situations of remorse and possible redemption can be insightfully analyzed in terms of a choice to distance oneself from the "old self" and identify oneself with a new self one wishes to become. Fred D. Miller Jr.'s essay, "Moral Character and Self-Government," uses Aristotle to argue that good democratic character—i.e., civic virtue—is necessary to sustain a democracy, which is essentially a people committed to self-rule in *both* senses of the term.

Daniel Robinson, in "Creating a Republic of Virtue," describes the American founders as aiming to establish a republic of virtue, expressed in religious terms, in contrast with the antagonistic separationist language

of today. The church was to be protected as a character-forming institution, and civic friendship based on virtue was to be cultivated to support a commitment to the common good.

In "The Psychology of Character and the Theology of Virtue," Robert Audi examines the differences between character traits (personality) and moral character (virtue), arguing that "lovingness" stands as a "connecting" virtue among the rest of the "interpersonal" virtues, in a role analogous to the one Aristotle gives *phronesis*. He also considers and responds to several objections to the adequacy of virtue-based explanations of human behavior.

"How God Makes All the Difference" is the last essay, by Richard Swinburne. In it, he defines the difference between necessary and contingent *moral* truths, and shows the difference it makes for the content of and motivation for morality whether or not God exists. The view of the moral life he offers focuses mainly on debt, guilt, atonement, and reparations, and a Christian view of grace shows up only in a parenthetical comment near the end. This essay, of all of them, seemed to have the thinnest connection to the central theme of moral formation in virtue.

In sum, the volume offers a variety of perspectives on the possibilities and problems associated with formation in virtue both at the individual and at the political levels. I would highly recommend the individual essays as engaging, historically minded, clearly written, and thought provoking. The project certainly demonstrates the challenges of attempting a unified conversation even among the different areas of philosophy on the subject of virtue, not to mention integrating interdisciplinary perspectives on the nature of the human person as a foundation for moral development. Nevertheless, as Titus set out both the promise and areas of challenge in his opening essay, the project seems worth pursuing, despite the difficulties.

Wise Stewards: Philosophical Foundations of Christian Parenting, by Michael W. Austin. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic and Professional, 2009. 192 pages. \$18.99 (paperback).

MICHAEL T. MCFALL, Bowling Green State University

Michael W. Austin's *Wise Stewards* is a rare philosophical book insofar as it succeeds in being accessible but challenging to both academics and non-academics. A trained philosopher will occasionally demand more justifications or distinctions, but in these cases one can consult Austin's more academic book, *Conceptions of Parenthood: Ethics and the Family*.¹ However, as the focus is parenting, a topic largely neglected by contemporary philosophers, *Wise Stewards* stands nicely on its own as an introduction to the philosophical foundations of parenting. Yet it is not merely an abstract

¹Michael W. Austin, *Conceptions of Parenthood: Ethics and the Family* (Aldershot, U.K./Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).